

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 119554
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:ADUBS:CF
APPROVED BY NEA:ADUBS
NSC:TTHORNTON
S/S-O :AOTTO

-----242020Z 026935 /73

O 241948Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119554

EXDIS FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM DUBS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: DESAI LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

-

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE LETTER DATED MAY 16 TO THE
PRESIDENT FROM PRIME MINISTER DESAI:

QTE DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF THE 4TH MAY. I AM ENCOURAGED
BY ITS WARMTH AND FRIENDLINESS TO EXPRESS MYSELF FULLY AND
FRANKLY ON THE VARIOUS ISSUES YOU HAVE COVERED IN IT AND
HOPE THAT YOU WILL NOT MIND IF I DO SO AT SOME LENGTH.

I WELCOME YOUR SUGGESTION THAT WE SHOULD PERIODICALLY EX-
CHANGE VIEWS ON HOW TO STRENGTHEN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS
AND ON LARGER QUESTIONS OF CONCERN TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY.
SUCH EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IS BOUND TO PROMOTE BETTER UNDER-
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 119554

STANDING OF EACH OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW PARTICULARLY WHEN
SOMETIMES THEY MAY BE AT VARIANCE.

AS YOU KNOW, WHEN INDIA BECAME INDEPENDENT, IT CHOSE TO
STEER ITS POLICIES, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, CLEAR OF THE
PRESSURE OF POWER BLOCS. FREE FROM IDEOLOGICAL AND
MILITARY GROUPINGS, NEVERTHELESS MAINTAINING ITS OWN

NATIONAL STANCE, INDIA HAS TRIED ITS BEST TO PLAY A HELP-
FUL ROLE IN THE FASHIONING OF WORLD ORDER WHICH WOULD

PERMIT NATIONS DILIGENTLY TO WORK FOR THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE PROCESS OBTAIN MAXIMUM INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION CONSISTENT WITH THEIR NATIONAL DIGNITY. WE JOINED IN THE EFFORT FOR ELIMINATION OF COLONIALISM, ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE THESE WERE FACTORS WHICH CAUSED TENSIONS AND WERE APT TO DISTURB WORLD PEACE AND STABILITY. WE HAVE TRIED TO ADHERE TO THIS COURSE AND TO SEE THAT GENERALLY OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES DO NOT IN ANY WAY, COME IN CONFLICT WITH THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

WE HAVE ALSO REALISED, AS MEMBERS OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY, THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE VAST BROTHERHOOD OF POVERTY-STRIKEN AND BACKWARD PEOPLE SPREAD ALL OVER THE DEVELOPING AND UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. THEY HAVE SUFFERED GRIEVOUSLY FROM THE RAVAGES OF HISTORY AND PERFORCE HAD TO LAG BEHIND WHILE OTHER COUNTRIES DEVELOPED, SOMETIMES AT THEIR EXPENSE.

I AM VERY HAPPY TO FIND THAT IN YOUR LETTER, YOU HAVE BEEN GOOD ENOUGH TO RECOGNISE THE VALIDITY OF OUR QUEST FOR SELF-RELIANCE AS ALSO OUR CONCERN FOR CORRECTING THE IMBALANCES BETWEEN NATIONS. I HAVE ALWAYS SEEN THAT THE LEADERS OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION BELIEVE THAT THE ENLIGHTENED OPINION AND NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE USA WOULD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 119554

BE BEST SERVED THROUGH THE RECOGNITION OF THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION PREVAILING IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, THEIR INTER SE RELATIONSHIP AND A REALISATION OF ITS OWN SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY. I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT IT HAS PERFORMED THAT ROLE TO A REASONABLE DEGREE DESPITE ADVERSE FACTORS AND CRITICISM AT HOME AND ABROAD. I PARTICULARLY WELCOME, MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR ENLIGHTENED APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS THAT BESET THE WORLD AND DEMAND SOLUTIONS WHICH IN SEVERAL CASES CANNOT BE KEPT PENDING EXCEPT AT NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL PERIL. I BELIEVE THAT NOTWITHSTANDING OCCASIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL APPROACH TO THOSE PROBLEMS, THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR MUTUAL COOPERATION TO REALISE OUR SHARED GOALS. INDEED, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT WITH THE IMPORTANCE YOU ATTACH TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING A NEW CHAPTER IS OPENED IN OUR RELATIONS WHICH WOULD BE BASED ON THE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND APPRECIATION OF EACH OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW AND DIFFICULTIES.

THE USA COMMANDS IMMENSE RESOURCES OF WEALTH, POWER AND TECHNOLOGY FROM WHICH MY COUNTRY HAS BENEFITTED SUBSTANTIALLY. INDIA'S PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL SELF-RELIANCE HAS ENABLED IT TO MAKE AVAILABLE ITS OWN

EXPERIENCE RELEVANT FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WITHOUT HESITATION, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO PLACE OUR CAPABILITIES AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WE SHALL ALWAYS COOPERATE WITH DEVELOPED ONES IN ORDER TO EASE THE DANGERS OF CONFRONTATION, REINFORCE THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND BUILD A NETWORK OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS.

YOU HAVE MENTIONED YOUR CONCERN ABOUT THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. I AM HAPPY TO SEE YOUR INTEREST AND INITIATIVE IN OBTAINING INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT TO SAFEGUARD THE WORLD AGAINST THE DANGERS OF DISSEMINATION OF THESE TERRIBLE ENGINES OF MASS DESTRUCTION. WE HOPE THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 119554

YOUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION WILL NOT ONLY LEAD TO THE ARREST OF THE VAST AND, IF I MAY SAY SO, WASTEFUL ACCUMULATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONRY BUT IN COURSE OF TIME ALSO RESULT IN TOTAL DISARMAMENT IN THIS DESTRUCTIVE FIELD. WE HAVE AN INTEREST IN SECURING THE DIVERSION OF THE IMMENSE RESOURCES WHICH GO INTO NUCLEAR WEAPONRY TO CONSTRUCTIVE AND DEVELOPMENTAL PURPOSES, WHICH NUCLEAR ENERGY CAN SERVE. WHILE ABHORING THE USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY IN QUEST OF INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION, WE ARE FULLY RESOLVED TO REMOVE IMPEDIMENTS IN THE EXPLORATION OF THAT ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS HAS TO BE UTILISED FOR THE WELFARE OF MANKIND AND IT WOULD BE AS CRIMINALLY NEGLECTFUL TO FAIL TO EXPLOIT IT FOR THAT PURPOSE AS IT WOULD BE WANTONLY INHUMAN TO DIVERT IT FOR WARLIKE AIMS. THIS TO MY MIND HAS TO BE THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR POLICY IN THE UTILISATION OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND I AM SURE YOU WILL APPRECIATE THE GENUINENESS AND SINCERITY OF OUR CONVICTION.

MY GOVERNMENT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT WE SHALL NOT USE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR WARLIKE PURPOSES WHATEVER OTHERS MAY DO AND I HAVE PUBLICLY REAFFIRMED THIS COMMITMENT. FOR US IT IS NOT A POLICY BUT AN ARTICLE OF FAITH. BUT, FACED AS WE ARE WITH GIGANTIC PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT AND LIMITATION OF FOSSIL FUEL, WE CANNOT BUT RELY ON NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS TO MEET OUR FUTURE ENERGY AND DEVELOPMENTAL REQUIREMENTS. IT IS AN INSTRUMENT OF INDUSTRIALISATION WITH IMMENSE POTENTIALITY. IT WAS MORE THAN TWO DECADES AGO THAT INDIA EMBARKED ON A SYSTEMATIC PROGRAMME OF TRAINING OUR SCIENTISTS IN USING NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. WE HAVE INVESTED A VAST AMOUNT OF SCARCE TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL

RESOURCES ON A CAREFULLY INTEGRATED PROGRAMME FOR THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR OUR DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS. WE COULD NOT POSSIBLY ABANDON THIS INVESTMENT TOWARDS NATIONAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 119554

SELF-RELIANCE, OR EVEN EASILY SUBSTITUTE IT. WE HAVE, THEREFORE, TO PERSIST IN THE COURSE WE SET 20 YEARS AGO AND I FEEL CERTAIN THAT THOSE WHO HAVE ANY LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS WILL REALISE, AS THE YEARS ROLL BY, THAT WE HAVE MATCHED OUR ACTIONS WITH OUR INTENTIONS.

IT IS TRUE THAT INDIA DID NOT SIGN THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY; WE HAVE MADE OUR REASONS FOR NOT DOING SO CLEAR MORE THAN ONCE AND I FEEL STRONGLY THAT WE ARE ENTITLED TO BE BELIEVED THAT OUR OBJECTIONS ARE BASED ON STRONG CONVICTIONS. WE ALSO DID CARRY OUT AN UNDERGROUND PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPERIMENT IN 1974. HERE AGAIN I DO NOT SEE WHY OUR BONAFIDES ARE SUSPECTED. WE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO FOLLOW IT UP ON HARMFUL LINES. WE HAVE NO HIDDEN DESIGNS AND OUR POLICY IN THIS MATTER IS AN OPEN BOOK. WE HAVE SUBJECTED, WHEREVER WE WERE REQUIRED TO DO SO, OUR EXPLORATION OF ATOMIC ENERGY TO PRESCRIBED SAFEGUARDS. WE DID NOT VIOLATE THE PARTIAL TEST BAN TREATY TO WHICH WE ARE A PARTY AND I AM ADVISED THAT THERE WAS NO RADIOACTIVE VENTING. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH BEFORE AND AFTER THE TREATY CONTINUED TO CARRY OUT ATMOSPHERIC NUCLEAR TESTS ON RELEASING RADIOACTIVITY WHICH SPREAD AROUND THE WORLD. I HOPE YOU WILL AGREE THAT DISCRIMINATORY RESTRAINTS ARE INCONSISTENT WITH OUR NATIONAL DIGNITY, AND FREEDOM TO PURSUE OUR DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS THROUGH SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS IS AN UNDENIABLE NATIONAL RIGHT AND OBLIGATION. I SEE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR DOUBTING THAT INDIA IS SECOND TO NONE IN ADOPTING A RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PRESENT AND FUTURE WORLD PEACE. THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND THE RESTRAINTS WHICH WE HAVE EXERCISED IN THE TRANSFER OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY IS PROOF ENOUGH THAT INDIA IN NO WAY WISHES TO ACCENTUATE THE DANGERS OF PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 119554

AS REGARDS THE TARAPUR REACTOR, WE PLANNED IT ON THE ASSURANCE OF ENRICHED FUEL BEING MADE AVAILABLE FOR ITS REQUIREMENTS. WE DID SO THROUGH A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WHICH EMBODIES FULL AND ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST ANY DANGER OF MISUSE. IT IS VITAL TO INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION IN THE STATES OF MAHARASHTRA AND GUJARAT WHICH AT PRESENT RECEIVE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THEIR ENERGY REQUIREMENTS FROM THE TARAPUR STATION. WE DO HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT THE QUESTION OF FUTURE SHIPMENTS TO TARAPUR AND THE

DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTE WILL BE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED AND THAT IT WOULD FREE US FROM A REAL THREAT TO THE WELL-

BEING OF A SIZEABLE RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION.

MR. PRESIDENT, LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT INDIA WILL ACTIVELY JOIN IN ANY FORM OF DISCIPLINE, DEVISED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT, WHICH AIMS AT REAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT SIDE BY SIDE WITH EFFORTS TO IMMUNISE THE WORLD AGAINST THE DANGERS OF NUCLEAR MISUSE. I FEEL THAT DISCIPLINE IN THE MATTER OF NON-PROLIFERATION MUST START WITH THE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ALREADY DEVELOPED NUCLEAR COMPETENCE OF A HIGH ORDER AND AS SUCH POSE GREATER DANGER AND NOT DIRECTED TO CONTROLLING THE STRUGGLING AMBITIONS, IN DEVELOPMENTAL EFFORTS, OF COUNTRIES LIKE INDIA.

WE REMAIN CONSTANTLY AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS IN WEST AFRICA, FOR US A NEIGHBOURING REGION WITH WHICH OUR OWN WELFARE IS LINKED, AND WITH WHICH IS BOUND UP THE PROSPECT OF PEACE IN THIS PART OF THE CONTINENT. YOUR BASIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM IS GREATLY TO BE WELCOMED, AND WE SHARE YOUR HOPE THAT A FAIR AND JUST PEACE CAN BE ESTABLISHED. ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, TOO, BOTH OUR COUNTRIES HAVE TRIED TO PROMOTE A SOLUTION THAT THE MAJORITY WILL FIND ACCEPTABLE AND WHICH WOULD END THE COLLECTIVE DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. WE HAVE ALWAYS FELT THAT THE AMERICAN ROLE COULD BE MOST IMPORTANT AND CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 07 STATE 119554

WE ARE HAPPY WITH THE RECENT INITIATIVES TAKEN BY YOUR ADMINISTRATION.

I HAVE NOTED WITH INTEREST WHAT YOU HAVE SAID ABOUT DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. THIS IS A MATTER OF CONCERN FOR US, AND WE SHALL CERTAINLY ELABORATE OUR THINKING ON THE QUESTION SO THAT THIS OCEAN MAY REMAIN FREE FROM THE UNPREDICTABLE MILITARY AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF GREAT POWERS RIVALRIES.

IN THE FEW WEEKS SINCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE IN INDIA, WE HAVE FURTHER INVIGORATED OUR EFFORTS IN THE SEARCH TO STRENGTHEN CONFIDENCE AND COOPERATION WITH OUR NEIGHBORS. I AM GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY YOUR APPROACH TO THE PROCESS OF NORMALISATION IN SOUTH ASIA SO THAT THIS REGION REMAINS FREE FROM EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE. ANY DIVERSION FROM THIS PATH OF PEACE, STABILITY AND COOPERATION CAN ONLY ADD TO THE BURDENS OF OUR PEOPLES. IT IS, THEREFORE, OUR SINCERE HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO INDUCTION, INTO THIS REGION, OR ARMS SUPPLIES AND SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS WHICH COULD REVIVE TENSIONS AND REKINDLE IRRESPONSIBLE PASSIONS.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR GOHEEN WHO HAS A RECORD OF UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY FOR ASIA. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT HE WILL CONFIRM THE WARM

FEELINGS AND AFFECTION WHICH THE PEOPLE OF INDIA HAVE FOR THE USA. I HAVE ALSO EVERY HOPE THAT HIS EFFORTS WILL BE CONSTANTLY DIRECTED TOWARDS PROMOTING THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

DURING HER VISIT TO INDIA WE WELCOMED MRS. LILLIAN CARTER AS A TRUE AND COMMITTED FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA WHO HAVE TREATED HER AS ONE OF THEMSELVES. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HER FOR HAVING STIMULATED YOUR OWN INTEREST IN THE STRUGGLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDIA. WHILE WE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 08 STATE 119554

SHALL MAINTAIN CLOSE LIAISON THROUGH OUR RESPECTIVE AMBASSADORS, I SHOULD LIKE TO URGE THAT THERE CAN BE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN NATIONAL LEADERS. I AM VERY HAPPY, THEREFORE, TO EXTEND OUR CORDIAL INVITATION TO YOU TO VISIT INDIA AT AN EARLY DATE CONVENIENT TO YOU. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE INDIAN PEOPLE WILL SPONTANEOUSLY DEMONSTRATE THEIR REGARD FOR YOU AND FOR THE UNITED STATES. IT WILL BE AN OCCASION TO REFLECT THAT THESE TWO LARGE FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACIES DRAWING STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE PEOPLES CAN WORK TOGETHER IN CLOSE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS NOT ONLY FOR THEMSELVES BUT FOR THE COMMON INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS.

WITH MY BEST PERSONAL REGARDS AND WISHES, YOURS SINCERELY,
MORARJI DESAI. END QTE. VANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRESIDENT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE119554
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:ADUBS:CF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770185-0383
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705110/baaaewav.tel
Line Count: 304
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cc6de888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2346570
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DESAI LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT - FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE LETTER DATED MAY 16 TO THE PRESIDENT FROM PRIME MINISTER DESAI:
TAGS: PFOR, PPDC, IN, (CARTER, JIMMY), (DESAI, MORARJI)
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cc6de888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009